

August 4, 2004



Providence man is sentenced to seven years in federal prison for firearms offense

A federal judge has sentenced **Carlos Rodriguez**, of Providence, to 84 months in federal prison for being a felon in possession of a firearm. Rodriguez had a handgun on him in January when Providence Police approached a car in which he was sitting. He has prior felony convictions for robbery and cocaine trafficking.

United States Attorney Robert C. Corrente announced the sentence, which Senior U.S. District Court Judge Ronald R. Lagueux imposed yesterday in U.S. District Court, Providence. Rodriguez, 26, of 869 Manton Avenue, pleaded guilty in May to being a felon in possession of a firearm.

At the plea hearing in May, Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen G. Dambruch said that, at about 1:00 AM on January 14, Providence Patrolmen Dennis O'Brien and Thomas Zincone observed Rodriguez and two other men sitting in a car parked on Whelan Street. As the officers approached, Rodriguez got out of the car and they then heard the sound of a round being chambered in a firearm. Rodriguez started running and tossed away a handgun and an ammunition magazine. The officers apprehended Rodriguez and recovered both the handgun and the magazine.

Federal firearms statutes classify the gun that Rodriguez had, a Norinco 7.62 millimeter pistol, as a semi-automatic assault weapon. That, plus Rodriguez's prior record of violent crime

and drug trafficking, subjected him to an enhanced sentence.

Providence Police and the **Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Dambruch prosecuted the case as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and have resulted in lengthy prison terms for gun offenders.

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